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ABSTRACT

This program lists texts, music, and art works that have been selected as a core of studies that continue through the curriculum from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade at The Montclair Kimberley Academy (New Jersey). The selections are representative of important texts, music, and art that have been taught to the Montclair Kimberley Academy (MKA) students throughout the years. MKA faculty have made their selections from the texts, music and art available, using a construct of four criteria of significance developed by the National Endowment for the Humanities. The four criteria include: timelessness (judged important by thoughtful men and women over long periods of history); (2) centrality (involves major themes and motifs, uses accepted methods of inquiry, is innovative with the promise of considerable influence); and (3) originality (not novel, but represents a genuine, fundamental shift in perspective that has the potential for meaningful new vision and understanding of any "human achievement worth understanding" [Wayne Booth]). To those criteria, MKA added "accessibility" as it relates to student ages and development. The bulletin notes that an outcome of the program is the opportunity to include significant non-Western texts, music, and art in the curriculum. All students engage in a coherent core of studies in writing, mathematics, science, foreign languages, technology, and citizenship. The table of contents includes: (1) "Philosophy" (Anticipated Outcomes, Special Curriculum Considerations, Operational Considerations, and Afterthought); (2) "Core Works by Grade"; and (3) "Core Works Narratives." (BT)

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PROGRAM

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Timelessness

Centrality

Influence

Originality

Accessibility

William Avery Barras, our school's teaching legend (1928-1956), once challenged, "If what I am saying goes over your head, raise your head." Great schools are made of such convictions and attitudes toward education and excellence. MKA faculty and administrators took this challenge to heart and acknowledged our school's motto, "Knowledge, Vision, and Integrity," as they initiated the *Core Works Program* in 1999. This unique program clarifies and declares just another example of serious intellectual purpose, and presents another reason why our school is worthy of the trust of its students, parents, and faculty. The *Core Works Program* elevates and advances the well-being of students and faculty by identifying significant literature and art guaranteed to be taught by our faculty to all students in each grade.

There is another powerful reason why this newest MKA program is essential to our students, to our school, and to the nation. In a July 1989 speech, "Ideas Die," given to The Council of the Great City Schools, our friend Dr. Edwin Delattre noted that when Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was murdered on the motel balcony in Memphis, a refrain of solace ran like wildfire through the country.

> The refrain was that the man was dead, the man could be killed, the individual human being could be snuffed out, but the ideas, the dream, could not be killed, could not be erased, could not die. The ideas of Martin Luther King, it was promised, would live, and it would remain true that "we shall overcome."

Delattre comments that this refrain offered us all scant solace in our heartache — for we knew it was not true. "We knew that ideas do die. Dreams die. They die unless they are transmitted from each generation to the next; they die unless they come to life and retain vitality in the hearts and minds of each generation as it grows toward adulthood and accepts the authority and responsibilities of that station."

Delattre went on to talk about the power of ideas:

> Ideas are enormously powerful. If the idea is good, the fruit is wholesome. If the idea is evil, the fruit is bitter, and its effects harmful. Justice is an idea; so is bigotry. They both have hugely dramatic and durable fruits. Cultures rooted in good ideas deserve respect; those rooted in the ideas of tyranny, bigotry, and contempt for human dignity do not. This, children deserve to learn. But despite their power, ideas are powerless unless people learn them, learn how to use them, apply them, keep them vital, make them their own by hard and disciplined thinking. Ideas have little life of their own, little power to keep themselves alive in the breasts and intelligence of human beings. For this, parents, teachers, and books are needed...and a way to tell the good ideas from the bad is needed.

The Montclair Kimberley Academy has taken Delattre's telling comments to heart and is determined to "keep good ideas alive" for all its students by constructing a *Core Works* segment of its curriculum. In Matthew Arnold's words, our purpose is to include the best that has been thought and said in the world. Our purpose is also to offer MKA students and their parents a framework for excellence in education.

The *Core Works Program* lists *significant* texts and *significant* art that have been selected by the faculty of the three campuses as a core of studies — a common core of texts and art — that continue through the curriculum from Pre-Kindergarten through 12th grade. It is important to understand that the *Core Works* selections are representative of important texts and art that have been taught to MKA students throughout the years. MKA faculty have made their selections from the plethora of texts and art available, using a construct of four criteria of significance developed by the National Endowment for the Humanities plus one special MKA criterion.

Our faculty selected our *Core Works* on the basis of **Timelessness** (judged important by thoughtful men and women over long periods of history); **Centrality** (involves major themes and motifs, uses accepted methods of inquiry, is innovative with the promise of considerable influence); **Influence/Importance** (reaches beyond the discipline and is useful and interesting); **Originality** (not novel, but represents a genuine, fundamental shift in perspective that has the potential for meaningful new vision and understanding of any "human achievement worth understanding" [Wayne Booth]). To those criteria, MKA added **Accessibility** (relates to student ages and development).

The *Core Works* is a promise that commits each MKA student and faculty member in the departments of English, History, and Art *at each specific grade level* to engage in studies of carefully chosen and inclusive texts and art. In a way, our *Core Works* are the MKA equivalent of state and national standards — though a difference is that MKA's "enduring understandings" (objectives) in the carefully prepared lesson plans for each *Core Work* will not be vague or general. In our *Core*, all of our students study works of enduring significance including great works of literature, works from the visual arts and music, and documents and speeches that inaugurate, define, or explain our nation's institutions, or which record important historical events and processes.

As one result of the *Core Works Program*, students at MKA will inherit the significant ideas of Western and world cultures and traditions that are rightfully theirs.

Anticipated Outcomes

The *Core Works Program* is meant to lead to a major result: that MKA graduates will have a uniformity of exposure to some of the great works that define the human experience, to the best that has been written and said. This uniformity of engagement by faculty and students will help us fulfill the following promises:

- We promise that MKA students are truly educated, that significant texts and art are kept fresh and alive through their study, and that an internal consistency of studies is maintained at MKA.
- We promise that MKA students will have a common language and common experiences in their discussions.
- We promise there will be a special foundation of study on which faculty can depend.
- We promise to provide a greater opportunity for parents and other adults to join with MKA in the study of common texts and art.
- We promise a commitment to mentor new faculty so that any potential erosion of coherent study and curriculum is addressed. The *Core Works Program* will serve as an anchor in this regard and will provide for both vertical and horizontal curriculum articulation.
- We promise to make it easier for colleges to know what to expect when they accept an MKA graduate, and that this information will help with the admission of MKA students to colleges and assist with the success of our students at the college and university level.
- We promise that the *Core Works Program* will establish logical lines of inquiry for faculty studies, necessarily increasing intellectual collegiality among the faculty, and enhance communication among faculty

in the Primary, Middle, and Upper School campuses — and across campuses.

- We promise that the *Core Works Program* will help parents know more about what they can expect when they make the decision to enroll their children at MKA.

- We promise to build a traditional study of literature and art that, as a British columnist once remarked, does not lose the unifying thread of cultural initiation.

- We promise to reestablish a link to the founding principles of MKA. The Classical and Scientific courses at Montclair Academy, as early as 1893-1894, focused on college-preparatory core works. There is also a strong link to the heart of MKA's current statement of philosophy, *Our Common Purpose*: "Our primary goal is to graduate young men and women who love learning, who acquire both the knowledge of fundamental subject matter and the power of learning, and who are well prepared to select and meet successfully the demands of a challenging college curriculum."

Perhaps the most important outcome from the *Core Works Program* is that MKA is seizing the opportunity for a unique and rigorous inclusion of significant non-Western texts and art in the curriculum. Most schools "wish" to teach non-Western texts and art with more competence and confidence. MKA is "willing" this to happen by including these in our *Core Works* and then engaging our faculty in studies with scholars from across the nation. In this way, those works will come alive in the classrooms, and MKA will assist its students to become citizens of the world and to understand each other better.

Special Curriculum Considerations

The *Core Works Program* does not drive the MKA curriculum. Rather, the curriculum drives the selection and listing of the *Core Works* and ensures that the texts and art are not the exclusive focus of a course, but give direction and energy to that course. In fact, the faculty selection of *Core Works* includes several works that are already taught as part of the MKA curriculum.

The *Core Works* is not a listing of the *only* texts and art taught each year to students at The Montclair Kimberley Academy. In addition to the study of significant texts and art, all students at MKA engage in a coherent core of studies in writing, mathematics, science, citizenship, foreign languages, and technology, as well as common experiences such as the 8th grade trip to Williamsburg and the 11th grade trip to Washington, D.C. For example, in the 3rd grade, *Trumpet of the Swan* and *Every Living Thing* are already studied. In the 7th grade, *Florence in the Time of the Medici* and *Cortes and the Aztecs* are already studied. In the 10th grade, several of the Federalist Papers are already studied by most students. Throughout the grades, the Fine & Performing Arts program is flourishing with Shakespeare, national award-winning MKA-produced movies, sculpture classes, and a Distance Learning course in art taught from Boston University.

Operational Considerations

MKA faculty members engaged in a difficult process of selecting significant Western and non-Western texts and art. Once they had made their selection, faculty teams wrote narratives for each of their selections using as a key reference the NEH's and MKA's criteria for "significance." The following substantial and complementary activities will also lead to successful teaching and learning:

• First, all faculty in a given grade have jointly designed common lesson plans for each text and work of art in the *Core Works Program*. Faculty are to provide their students the same general amount of engaged time with the text or art, though they may well add their own individual knowledge and craft in different ways. For example, faculty team members in the 7th grade who are responsible for the text by Pablo Neruda, "Then Up the Ladder," will plan and reexamine for each September a related common lesson plan. Though they will have common "enduring understandings," common materials and translations, common assessment practices, and will engage their students in serious study of that text for a common period of time, each faculty member on that team can go beyond these commonalities to add his or her own teaching touches or to differentiate instruction for students of differing abilities.

• Second, faculty are able to study with each other and with national scholars each year so that their presentation of the texts and art will be at the highest levels of teaching and learning. MKA has budgeted sufficient funds so that faculty teams responsible for the teaching of a specific text or art piece will have the ongoing opportunity to work with scholars or to engage in other learning, e.g., traveling to Mississippi to participate in a William Faulkner seminar, and working closely with experts at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. In preparation for the first year of study, MKA faculty members have already studied with Boston University's Dr. Paula Fredriksen, a noted authority on the Bible; Indiana University's Dr. John Patrick, an international figure in the teaching of founding documents; Merrimac College's Dr. William Wians, who accepted our invitation to study the *Odyssey* with us; Columbia University's Dr. Robert Simon, who counseled us on 19th Century art works; Bank Street School's Dr. Nina Jaffe, who assisted with such works as *Anansi the Spider, Lon Po Po*, and *Bringing the Rain To Kapiti Plain*; the University of Rochester's Dr. George Grella, an expert on the film *Casablanca*; Rafe Martin, the author of *The Rough-Face Girl*, one of the 2nd grade's *Core Works*; Boston University's Dr. Steven Tigner, MKA's close academic friend for six years, who worked with our Upper School faculty on such texts as *Gulliver's Travels* and *Oedipus Rex*; and SUNY-Geneseo's Dr. Ronald Herzman, who has shepherded our program since its inception and taught us Dante's *Divine Comedy*.

Each *Core Works* text and art piece has a key faculty contact or "captain" responsible for the team's activities: cultivation of information, knowledge, interdisciplinary opportunities, and the craft of teaching the respective work. For example, the 10th grade team will have "captains" for *Macbeth*, classic slave narratives, selections from the Bible, *A Man For All Seasons*, Raphael's *The School of Athens*, and for Alexander Gardner's Civil War photography. These captains will lead faculty study, bring scholars to faculty study sessions, and monitor the writing and implementation of the respective lesson plans. The role of captain will rotate among team members each year.

• Third, faculty will consistently teach each other — a high form of collegiality and always a sign of a strong school, a strong curriculum, and a strong faculty. The identification and sharing of articles, reviews, and other information will become more focused. For example, one 3rd grade faculty member might discover items in the *New York Times Book Review* that inform about The Mayflower Compact and Chartres Cathedral, a 6th grade significant art piece. That person could now share the first item with his 3rd grade team members and share the second item with colleagues in the 6th grade. The 7th grade team might talk with each other about *You Can't Take It*

With You and discover new ways to integrate more effectively that work into the total 7th grade curriculum.

• Fourth, faculty will continually document their successes and concerns with certain texts and art in the *Core Works*. This information can be relayed to the scholars, et al., and the teaching dialogue will continue — via e-mail, telephone calls, and through the use of MKA's Distance Learning Room. For example, 10th grade English faculty might sense that they should have drawn out more substantive understandings from a selection from the Bible, the story of "Ruth and Naomi." That faculty team would contact Dr. Ronald Herzman at SUNY-Geneseo to set up a Distance Learning, e-mail, telephone, FAX, or in-person conference to foster further discussion.

• Fifth, MKA's *Core Works* is to be reviewed every five years to reexamine and renew it, and to address telling curriculum changes that have taken place. Should there be unanticipated, dramatic curriculum change within each five-year period, cogent adjustments will be made in the *Core Works*. For example, the 1st grade faculty might determine that they would change the major units and themes at that grade. *The Nutcracker Ballet* might not then be as easily integrated into the new curriculum. The 1st grade faculty would petition for a change of the *Core Works* art piece to one that meets the needs of the curriculum.

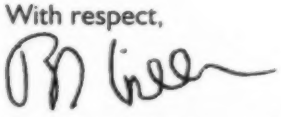
• Sixth, MKA anticipates that other schools around the country will want to learn more about the *Core Works Program* and how it has all turned out. MKA will be well poised to provide such information through conferences and articles and to assist others where it can. Permanent and "living" documents related to the *Core Works Program* include a listing of the significant texts and art, short narratives that explain why each piece was deemed significant, and ongoing lesson plans for each work. The documents will be constantly updated to provide internal tightness and advancement of teaching.

Afterthought

The process of selecting the *Core Works* for each grade has been revealing. Faculty members with differing opinions, but with good will, forged a *Core Works Program* list that will engender even more confidence in the MKA curriculum and teaching. The faculty demonstrated that they understand compromise, that they understand the possibility that outsiders may point out another text or piece of art that "could have/should have" been used rather than the one selected, or that someone will quarrel with the definitions of "inclusion" and "non-Western." They understand that MKA has embarked on a unique program which requires their intense study, continued scholarship, and collaboration. It is a splendid faculty. The *Core Works* is a significant new program for us all.

Good ideas will not die at The Montclair Kimberley Academy.

With respect,



Dr. Peter R. Greer, on behalf of the entire *Core Works* Faculty Committee and Administration
June 1999

Special Note: On January 28, 1999, the Board of Trustees of The Montclair Kimberley Academy unanimously approved this major program addition.

Core Works by

		Strand I (text)
Pre-K		*My Very First Mother Goose* (Opie, Editor)
K		*The Children's Aesop* (Calmenson, Editor)
1		*Charlotte's Web* (White)
2		*Rip Van Winkle* (Irving)
3		*The Mayflower Compact*
4		*Paul Revere's Ride* (Longfellow)
5		*Stories from Ancient Greece (e.g., Pandora's Box; Phaethon and the Sun Chariot; The Trojan Horse)*
6	English:	*The Extraordinary Cases of Sherlock Holmes* (Doyle)
	History:	*Magna Carta*
7	English:	*To Kill A Mockingbird* (Lee)
	History:	*The Cowtail Switch and Other West African Stories** (Courlander and Herzog, Editors)
8	English:	*Odyssey* (Homer)
	History:	*The Declaration of Independence*

Grade

Strand 2 (text)	Strand 3 (art)	Page
*Anansi the Spider** (McDermott)	*Collection of Signs* (Klee)	13
*Lon Po Po** (Young)	*Carnival of the Animals* (Saint-Saens)	14
*Bringing the Rain To Kapiti Plain** (Aardema)	*The Nutcracker Ballet* (Tchaikovsky)	15
*The Rough-Face Girl** (Martin)	*Frank Lloyd Wright*	16
Damon and Pythias	*African sculptural forms**	17
The New Colossus (Lazarus)	*Aida* (Verdi)	19
*Hammurabi's Code of Law**	*Georgia O'Keeffe*	20
The Road Not Taken (Frost)	*Chartres Cathedral*	21
Then Up the Ladder from *The Heights of Macchu Picchu* (Neruda)	*You Can't Take It With You* (Kaufman and Hart)	23
Theme for English B and *Harlem* (Hughes)	*Revelations* (Ailey)	24

Core Works by

		Strand I (text)
9	English:	*Oedipus Rex* *Antigone* (Sophocles)
	History:	*The Analects** (Confucius)
10	English:	*Macbeth* (Shakespeare)
	History:	*Classic Slave Narratives* (Douglass and Jacobs)
11/12	History:	*The Jungle* (Sinclair)
	English:	*The Scarlet Letter* (Hawthorne)
		The Metamorphosis (Kafka)
		The Red Badge of Courage (Crane)
		The Inferno from Divine Comedy (Dante)
		Song of Solomon (Morrison)
		The Legend of the Grand Inquisitor (Dostoyevsky)
		Gulliver's Travels (Swift)
		Jane Eyre (Bronte)
		Songs of Innocence and Experience (Blake)
		The Sound and the Fury (Faulkner)
		Grapes of Wrath (Steinbeck)
		What Does It Mean? (Milosz)

Grade

Strand 2 (text)	Strand 3 (art)	Page
Lord of the Flies (Golding)	*Seeking the Tao in* the Autumn Mountains* (Ju-Ran [attributed])	26
*Hind Swaraj** (Gandhi)		
Selections: The Bible	*The School of Athens* (Raphael)	28
A Man For All Seasons (Bolt)	*Home of a Rebel Sharpshooter, Gettysburg, July, 1863* (Gardner)	
Letter From a Birmingham City Jail (M.L. King, Jr.)	*A Bar At the Folies Bergère* (Manet)	30
	Casablanca	
	The Soldier's Tale (Stravinsky)** alternating with *Symphony No. 9* (Beethoven)	

Note: 11th and 12th grade students read a minimum of four *Core Works* texts in their English classes.
*Denotes Non-Western (MKA definition)
**Performances TBA

McDermott, *Anansi the Spider*
Literature Pre-Kindergarten

A West African folktale from the Ashanti culture, *Anansi the Spider* represents part of the Ashanti people's **original** oral tradition. Anansi is a wise and lovable trickster and a folk hero. In this tale, Anansi sets out on a long and difficult journey that takes on the mythical qualities of hardship, transformation and ultimate triumph. Anansi's six sons play significant roles in assisting Anansi through his difficulties.

Accessible to students because it is told for entertainment in the spirit of play, *Anansi the Spider* addresses **central** themes such as the supportive qualities of the family. It **influences** children to realize the importance of family support and the value of making friendships. In addition, the story encourages children to examine the significance of making choices and the responsibilities associated with those choices. The trials and tribulations that Anansi endures are **timeless,** and they demonstrate that, although the story is rooted in a different cultural tradition, all human beings share similar problems and have similar needs.

Opie (editor), *My Very First Mother Goose*
Literature Pre-Kindergarten

Central to both the oral and written traditions, the rhymes that children experience in reading *My Very First Mother Goose* are as essential and **influential** to the ear as a lullaby. These **original** rhymes bring the sounds and rhythms of language to children's ears and speak to the essence of childhood. They are easy for students to memorize and recite and even more **accessible** because they lend themselves to games, songs and finger plays. Although originally intended for adult audiences, the rhymes included in *My Very First Mother Goose* have certainly become a **timeless** tradition for children.

Klee, *Collection of Signs*
Art Pre-Kindergarten

Just as our ancient ancestors used cave drawings to provide history, myth and significance through the marks and configurations of hieroglyphs, children draw spirals, circles and lines in patterns of increasing complexity to express themselves. Paul Klee, a Swiss-born artist, was always interested in this artistic expression of children. Through his small watercolors, etchings and drawings, Klee developed an **original** style that combined his humor with a childlike, artistic vision. As a result, *Collection of Signs* is visually playful and delightfully imaginative. Yet the youthful qualities of his work are more complex and layered than the simplicity of his style might initially suggest. These qualities make Klee's artwork a **timeless** favorite for children and adults alike.

While his titles give some hints about his works' meanings, Klee supplies no definite answers. However, children find *Collection of Signs* immensely **accessible** and have no problem assigning meaning to Klee's pictorial language. His work addresses the **centrality** of human expression and speaks clearly to children since they seem to share a common ideography reflective of early hieroglyphics. Indeed, children find a "kindred spirit" in this **influential** modern master.

Calmenson (editor), *The Children's Aesop*
Literature Kindergarten

When examining the roots of children's literature, the fables of Aesop instantly emerge as **important** historical and literary works. The fables are fictions that render fundamental truths **accessible** to students by incorporating themes that connect to real-life, human experience. Through their **original** portrayals of charming animals, these tales present moral lessons in a format that is didactic, but instructive and entertaining.

Aesop's short, **timeless** fables embody the transition from the oral tradition to the written text, always ending with a humanistic message. Intentionally undeveloped characters and predictable, though complex, plots allow young listeners to sustain their focus on the stories' **central** moral issues with an appreciation of the drama and beauty. *The Children's Aesop* promotes discussion of wisdom, humor and the universal lessons that the fables teach.

Young, *Lon Po Po*
Literature Kindergarten

Lon Po Po, a Chinese counterpart to *Little Red Riding Hood*, is a **timeless**, cautionary tale that comes from an ancient oral tradition and is thought to be 1,000 years old. Unlike its western counterpart, however, *Lon Po Po* does not present a fearful adventure, but instead depicts an **original** story in which three intelligent and clever children recognize the wolf immediately and plot the wolf's demise from the beginning of the tale.

This version of the story is **accessible** to students because they recognize aspects of the familiar *Little Red Riding Hood* tale, and they realize that the story is universal in its representations of **central** themes such as trust, communication and unification of the family. In addition, students are fascinated with Young's illustrations, split into sections to give the appearance of Chinese decorative panels. The colors are strong with dramatic angles that give the illustrations a contemporary look. A comparative study of *Lon Po Po* and *Little Red Riding Hood* provides the basis for an **important** examination of the impact of culture on stories and their illustrations.

Saint-Saens, *Carnival of the Animals*
Art Kindergarten

Carnival of the Animals, written during the Romantic/Impressionistic period by Camille Saint-Saens, is a perfect introduction to classical music for young children. Saint-Saens believed that learning to differentiate musical sounds at an early age is **important**, so with an **original** sense of satiric fun, he cleverly offered children an invitation into the world of classical music.

The theme of a "carnival of animals" has a **timeless** appeal to children's hearts, minds and imaginations. Students find this music **accessible** and captivating because different musical instruments creatively bring to life the sounds of nature and animals. In turn, students enjoy recognizing the sway of animals in the music and acting out their interpretations as they explore the **central** aspects of music, movement and dance. Children certainly take their experience of *Carnival of the Animals* with them into the carnival of their own imaginations.

White, *Charlotte's Web*
Literature 1

Charlotte's Web is revered as a **timeless** children's classic. It received Newbery Award honors in 1953 "for literary quality and quality of presentation for children" and continues to appear on well-respected children's book lists. Through humor, pathos, wisdom and beauty, White tells an **accessible** story that explores the **central** issues of life, death, friendship, diversity, justice, courage and moral dilemma.

White uses an **original** mix of fantasy and reality to capture young readers. Students can easily identify with Fern, the novel's eight-year-old protagonist, and her vision and understanding of life. Through the personification of a spider, Charlotte, and of a pig, Wilbur, students also learn of the "web" of friendship between two animals who often receive little regard from people. *Charlotte's Web* helps students to celebrate nature's beauty, and Charlotte helps them to address their fears of death. Indeed, the delicate realism of *Charlotte's Web* holds meaning for readers of all ages and **influences** them to engage in serious moral conversations.

Aardema, *Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain*
Literature 1

Originally discovered in 1909 by an anthropologist living in Africa, *Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain* is a **timeless** tale that now appears on the American Library Association list of classics. Aardema's retelling of the tale is reminiscent of the oral storytelling tradition historically embraced by African cultures. This rhythmic and repetitive story is written in language that children find to be both **accessible** and memorable.

While in some ways *Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain* echoes the nursery rhyme "The House that Jack Built," the beautiful rhythm and cumulative pattern of the language demonstrate **originality**. *Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain* explores the **central** theme of how various cultures have sought a logical explanation for natural phenomena. In addition, the legend **influences** children to examine cause and effect and to explore how they interpret the unexplained phenomena they find around them.

Tchaikovsky, *The Nutcracker Ballet*
Art 1

The Nutcracker is a fable/fantasy that includes **central**, traditional dance motifs and folklore from various countries within a unified, well-orchestrated, symphonic framework. Studying this **timeless** children's classic introduces students to dance as an important art form. Both Balanchine and Baryshnikov have choreographed beautiful, enchanting productions of *The Nutcracker* that children love.

The Nutcracker **influences** the human spirit as it transcends reality to capture the essence of childhood. The little girl Clara, the strange Herr Drosselmeier with his life-size dolls, the Nutcracker turned Prince, the seven-headed Mouse King, the Sugar Plum Fairy, and the delightful dancing treats in the enchanting Land of Sweets all comprise an **accessible**, magical tale brought to life by dance. The ballet's **original** coupling of dance, music and costumes directly inspires children's imaginations through their experience of classical art.

Second

Martin, *The Rough-Face Girl*
Literature 2

An **original**, Algonquin version of the "Cinderella" fairy tale, *The Rough-Face Girl* is a literary work from the Native American, storytelling tradition. Common to many cultures, this tale is **important** to students as they grapple with issues of fairness and helps them to develop their own sense of right and wrong.

The Rough-Face Girl is **accessible** to students because it presents a familiar moral theme, but it is set in an unfamiliar time, place and culture that require students to derive new understandings from the story. *The Rough-Face Girl* illuminates the **central** themes of goodness, honesty and justice through its portrayal of characters that personify the **timeless** conflicts humans confront in making moral choices.

Irving, *Rip Van Winkle*
Literature 2

Rip Van Winkle, originally published in 1819, is a **timeless** classic that has been told and retold for generations. In fact, Washington Irving's story of Rip Van Winkle's extended nap has become a **central** reference point for American culture and the American literary tradition. Though Irving may not have intended to write a commentary on American society, *Rip Van Winkle* has come to represent the **importance** of the American people's spirit during the revolutionary period and of America's changing ideals.

Irving's simple story about how a society can change over time is easily **accessible** to students and gives them insight into the American colonists and the village life of the Hudson River Valley before the War of Independence. Through his **original** representation of a symbolic change in Rip Van Winkle, Irving portrays a significant change in the American people, both before and after the American Revolution. Rip's transformation of his past experience in the Dutch colony into a new life under the American flag touches on fundamental principles of democracy and directly reflects the establishment of an American tradition.

Frank Lloyd Wright,
representative works
Art 2

Few architects' designs have remained as inspirational and **timeless** as Frank Lloyd Wright's. Believing that powerful art rests on powerful ideas, Wright revolutionized American architecture by designing **original** houses that are open in plan with walls of glass, soaring cantilevered rooflines and radiant heating embedded in concrete floors. These designs are sensitive to the human purpose and to the environment. Wright's ideas and innovations set a standard for architecture in American culture that embodies **central** themes of freedom of expression and democracy and continues to inform and **influence** generations of architects.

Architecture is a visual art that is **accessible** to children because of its experiential nature. The study of architecture is important in learning to perceive objects in space and to use and comprehend graphic languages. As students learn to recognize visual order, texture, color, pattern, symbolism, craftsmanship, expression and beauty, they increase their ability to "read" their built environment. This "visual literacy" is critical to our future. Wright believed that architecture must inspire young people if this country is to be beautiful.

Third

"Damon and Pythias"
Literature 3

One of the earliest references to the Greek legend of "Damon and Pythias" was its retelling by the great Roman orator Cicero in the first century B.C. In the last decade of the twentieth century, this **timeless** story was included in the chapter on friendship in *The Book of Virtues* and in *The Book of Virtues for Young People*, both edited by William Bennett. The story's endurance can be attributed, in part, to the **centrality** of its theme of friendship, a basic, universal, human need. "Damon and Pythias" provides an **original** perspective on friendship by showing children that true friendship can be far more than sharing and enjoying someone's company. The story broadens children's perspectives by depicting friendship in its most extreme and selfless state: one individual's willingness to sacrifice his own life for his friend's.

The importance of having good, strong friendships to enrich and mold children's lives cannot be underestimated. Good friends serve as role models, and as friendships mature, children learn such concepts as kindness, self-sacrifice and loyalty. Friendships such as the one portrayed in "Damon and Pythias" **influence** children by helping them to become outstanding citizens and caring, respectable people; poor choices of friends can have the opposite effect. Children must learn how important the selection of friends can be in their lives. The dramatic and memorable story of "Damon and Pythias" is very **accessible** to third grade students because they are at a critical stage in their development of friendships when they are just beginning to branch out, form cliques and make decisions independent of their parents. Exposing children to the "Damon and Pythias" myth, which demonstrates the highest level of friendship, provides them with a quintessential model of the value of a good friend.

The Mayflower Compact
Literature 3

The Mayflower Compact is one of the great documents of American history. **Central** to our nation's history, this agreement gives us insight into the philosophical and political themes reflected in our country's founding principles, people, and past. In fact, the establishment of a community of humanity is an important theme in the history of all human societies.

The group of settlers aboard the Mayflower was diverse. About half, who called themselves Saints, left England to be free from religious persecution. The others, dubbed Strangers, left England for adventure or because they were unhappy or in trouble. Because problems arose between the Saints and the Strangers, they needed rules, laws and leaders to enable them to live together peacefully. As a result, they drew up a plan of government that established a governing body. The **original** concept of a group of diverse and reasonable people agreeing to live together under a government of laws is central to the principle of democracy. The ideal of one body of content establishing laws and ordering relationships, as well as simultaneously limiting and empowering government, is a **timeless** concept that has been the foundation of our country's history and government. The Mayflower Compact is the first example of constitutionalism and of a democratic government in our country, and its ideals were a significant **influence** in the constitutions of The Massachusetts Bay Colony, Rhode Island, Connecticut and Pennsylvania, and in the Constitution of the United States. Understanding the concept of a group of diverse people needing to work and live together peacefully is essential to creating a dynamic, successful classroom culture and is, therefore, an **accessible** concept for third grade students.

African Sculptural Forms
Art 3

One of the greatest contributions that African cultures have made to the cultural heritage of humankind is their richly varied use of geometric form. The aesthetic impact of their works has been substantial, and the **influence** upon the development of twentieth century Western art is resounding. Certainly we recognize their immense impact in the works of Picasso, Braque, Brancusi, Modigliani, and others, that led to such art movements as Cubism, Expressionism, Fauvism and Surrealism.

Although there are many African tribes and races and over a thousand different languages, three distinct types of societies south of the Sahara comprise our focus: 1) nomadic tribes in the desert; 2) sedentary farming cultures in the savanna; and 3) ancient, sophisticated kingdoms of Nigeria and the Guinea Coast of West Africa. While all have their own distinct cultures, beliefs and customs, their **original** art forms are similar in use of geometric abstraction, attention to craftsmanship, and intimate connection to the lives and religious beliefs of their creators. In the absence of written documents, Africans often preserved their beliefs and values by conveying them from generation to generation through their art. The **centrality** and significance of each work, therefore, derives not only from its tangible form and its aesthetic merit, but equally from the concepts and beliefs that it embodies. Such sculptural forms offer an important avenue to an art that was born out of ritual and meaning. They represent a **timeless** art that is inseparable from life as they take on the powerful images of myth and transformation. This study of African sculptural forms is **accessible** to third grade students because it dovetails with the clay program as students continue to experiment with concepts of design.

Fourth

Longfellow, "Paul Revere's Ride"
Literature 4

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was the most famous and widely published American poet of the 1800s. His lyric and narrative poetry made a **timeless** contribution to the American literary tradition. "Paul Revere's Ride" speaks to the common man about the **central** themes of courage, ingenuity and bravery in the face of great odds. Written in clear, simple language that students find **accessible**, the poem in many of its recent editions also includes illustrations with pictures and maps to enhance young people's understanding of its Revolutionary War tale.

As an integral part of the American experience, the Revolutionary War provided the foundation for our country's values. "Paul Revere's Ride" is **original** in the very human, historical context it provides for students to view the War of Independence between Great Britain and the American Colonies. Longfellow's poem created an **important**, national legend about Paul Revere, an ordinary American citizen, and immortalized the Revolutionary spirit of the American people.

Lazarus, "The New Colossus"
Literature 4

Emma Lazarus wrote "The New Colossus" in 1883 to welcome people seeking freedom and opportunity in America. The sonnet appears on the Statue of Liberty, which historically greeted immigrants as they passed through Ellis Island to America, a land many viewed as one of great promise. With its **original** invitation to the downtrodden of Europe and the world to come to America, this poem has been a **timeless** source of hope and inspiration for all American immigrants.

A symbol of American freedom and compassion, "The New Colossus" has emotionally **influenced** millions of immigrants who sailed into the New World. The poem evokes such emotion because it addresses the **central** themes related to the hopes and dreams of all American immigrants as they embark on a new life. Students find the poem **accessible** in part because the language is clear and simple and in part because many students have relatives who passed through Ellis Island or who are recent immigrants. Studying such a powerful poem encourages students to explore their own family and emotional ties to the immigration process.

Verdi, *Aida*
Art 4

The tragic love story of Giuseppe Verdi's *Aida* is one of his best-known operas. Although the King of Egypt commissioned Verdi to write the opera to celebrate the opening of the Suez Canal, the story it tells is a **timeless** one of Aida, an Ethiopian princess who is captured and enslaved by Egyptians. She falls in love with the Egyptian conquering hero, Radames, so the two are torn between their love for each other and their loyalty to their countries.

Set at a time when Ethiopia and Egypt are waging war and enslaving their captives, the story **influences** students to closely examine the issues associated with war and slavery and to additionally consider the **central** themes of loyalty, class distinctions and jealousy. Since these concepts are universal, the story holds valuable lessons about situations in the world today. Students find the music of *Aida* **accessible** in part because they first read the book *Aida*, written by Leontyne Price and illustrated by Caldecott Medal recipients Leo and Diane Dillon. Then they are ready to examine and apply the music values of mood, instrumentalization and rhythm.

Hammurabi's Code of Laws
Literature 5

Written in the 18th century B.C., Hammurabi's Code of Laws sought to establish consistent rule throughout Hammurabi's empire. Hammurabi was one of the **original** leaders in history to create a consistent code under which all of the people of an empire would be ruled and judged. Both as a record of Babylonian life and law and as a prototype for later legal systems, the **timeless** Code has endured to the present day. Phrases from the Code like "an eye for an eye" are part of our contemporary culture.

Although it was neither the first nor the best of the early law codes, Hammurabi's Code of Laws is important because it is so well preserved and complete. In addition, codes like Hammurabi's **influenced** many other civilizations in the development of their legal systems. This Code provides an excellent opportunity to explore the **central** theme of justice through the issues of fair punishment and equal rights under the law. Students find such issues of justice **accessible** and enjoy exploring and debating the fairness of Hammurabi's laws.

Stories from Ancient Greece
"The Trojan Horse" from Homer, *The Iliad*
Greek myths, e.g., "Pandora's Box" and "Phaethon and the Sun Chariot"
Literature 5

Greek myths and stories have been a part of Western culture for more than 3,000 years. They illustrate how people have developed stories to explain the world around them and to perpetuate the values of their cultures. The **central** themes of these Greek stories–questions about why good and evil exist in the world and the values of honor, bravery and humility–are truly **timeless**. Students find the "good versus evil" struggles and other ethical issues embodied in Greek myths to be very **accessible** and enjoy examining the mythical explanations given to natural phenomena.

As a literary genre, myths and hero stories have served as the **original** model for new literary forms as diverse as modern drama and video games. They have also **influenced** works in virtually every other artistic medium, including dance, music, painting, sculpture and film. Allusions to Greek mythology often appear in popular media and advertising, as well as in modern literary works. American culture has long tried to imitate the success of these ancient tales and has created "new myths" around movie and comic book heroes, even athletes and rock stars. The shortcomings of these imitators only serve to highlight the enduring qualities of the Greek tales.

O'Keeffe, selected works
Art 5

Georgia O'Keeffe was a pioneering American artist whose work has become an **important** touchstone for twentieth century art. Inspired by both the American and the European avant-garde movements in the early part of the twentieth century, O'Keeffe is known for her **original** use of bold imagery and color. In his essay "Georgia O'Keeffe: Art and Artist," Jack Cowarth explains, "[O'Keeffe's] art is memorable. A clear, indelible, core image of each work is retained in our mind's eye after even the briefest glimpse. . . . No artist has seen and painted like O'Keeffe, whose spiritual communion with her subject was of a special quality, unparalleled and irreducible."[1] Clearly, the power of O'Keeffe's work has made it **timeless**.

O'Keeffe created variations on **central** themes–particularly natural themes exploring flowers and plants, landscapes and rock formations. She sought to fill space in a beautiful way and demonstrated a true understanding of the need for

balanced composition within a work. She worked to please herself, and her view of her own artwork was certainly humble. Although she had a degree in art, she noted, "I was taught to paint like other people, and I knew that I'd never paint as well as the person I was taught to paint like."[2] Students find O'Keeffe's approach to her own artwork to be **accessible** since they are struggling to make their art "look like something." Although they are exposed to the artistic techniques of others, they too must ultimately develop their own style. Students also connect with O'Keeffe's love of nature as they begin to examine their own natural environments more closely.

Doyle, *The Extraordinary Cases of Sherlock Holmes*
English 6

Written around the turn of the 20th century, *The Extraordinary Cases of Sherlock Holmes* features perhaps the most famous character in English literature. These stories are **timeless** not because of their age, but because they so clearly mark the passage of society's thought from subjective, emotional cloudiness to the clear objectivity of the scientific method. The **central** themes of good versus evil, justice versus crime, and methodical study versus blind guessing are hallmarks of Doyle's writing.

The **original** works in *The Extraordinary Cases of Sherlock Holmes* clearly delineate the new genre of the modern detective story in which the protagonist doggedly pursues every possible line of reasoning to solve the seemingly impossible puzzle. Of course, Doyle constructed these mysteries with his own solutions in mind; the stories simply encourage readers to believe that the insights of Holmes are the only "truths." Nevertheless, the character studies in these stories **influence** readers to examine their surroundings using the scientific method and psychoanalysis. Students who are just learning about the scientific method find *The Extraordinary Cases of Sherlock Holmes* to be both **accessible** and fascinating as they accompany Holmes in observing his surroundings and then forming inferences based on observations.

Frost, "The Road Not Taken"
English 6

Perhaps America's best-loved poet, Robert Frost has earned a worldwide reputation with children and adults alike. In the words of the anthologist Joel Conarroe, "[Frost] has a special appeal to harried city dwellers, who see in his orderly, pastoral narratives... a vision of life rooted in permanent values and traditions far removed from the chaotic urban scene."[3] A New England man, Frost spent many years in Britain, and his poetry is influenced by the great British traditions of Milton, Spenser, Keats, Shelley and Browning, among others. His work has won him four Pulitzer Prizes, two resolutions of praise from the U.S. Senate, and numerous honorary degrees. Indeed, Frost is one of America's most **influential** poets who, in the words of President Kennedy, "has bequeathed his nation a body of imperishable verse from which Americans will forever gain joy and understanding."[4]

In "The Road Not Taken," one of his best-known and most **accessible** poems, Frost introduces an **original** perspective by presenting an older man's reflections and inviting younger readers to similarly examine their own lives. Hindsight engenders foresight and liberates the young mind to make bold choices. "The Road Not Taken" reinforces the **central** theme that young people must learn to think for themselves and risk choosing paths. The poem reminds students that the choices they make each day irrevocably place them on a path and that courageous choices result in lessons worth learning. These are **timeless** concepts for preadolescents, who face many crucial decisions in their futures.

Magna Carta
History 6

The Magna Carta, signed in 1215, was a British constitutional charter intended to limit the power of the tyrannical King John I. It helped to define the concept of "due process of law" and served as the basis for the American Bill of Rights and for the foundational policies of other nations as well. As a precursor to America's founding documents, the Magna Carta demonstrates that the **timeless** ideals of personal freedom and liberty were as **central** in the early 13th century as they are today.

The **originality** of the Magna Carta unquestionably lies in its historic and unprecedented assertion that a free man could not be imprisoned, dispossessed, outlawed, etc., except by legal judgment of his peers or by the law of the land. In addition, the Magna Carta has **influenced** many societies to ensure that no man is above the law. Students find this work **accessible** because they, too, struggle to assert their own independence and can easily identify with the need for personal freedom and liberty.

Chartres Cathedral
Art 6

Chartres Cathedral, built between 1194 and 1223, still stands as a **timeless** example of Gothic architecture. A fine, **accessible** example of the craftsmanship and architectural innovations of the Middle Ages, Chartres also reflects a great deal about medieval culture, which revolved around faith in God and focused on the Church as the vehicle for salvation. During the Middle Ages, cathedrals grew to monumental size and represented significant investments of both money and time; as such, cathedrals were considered to be very **important** representations of the people's faith. In addition, when bad weather prevented outside gatherings, cathedrals were also centers for secular activities such as commerce and town meetings.

An examination of the stained glass and relief sculpture of Chartres Cathedral reveals the **central** themes of Christian faith and an understanding of the world of the day. The cathedral's design demonstrates an **original** shift in the approach to architecture by incorporating art into the design and implementation of the building plans. Highlights, shadows, curves and rhythms of the sculpture follow and blend into the building surfaces. The walls are designed to provide more support for the stained glass and to maximize the amount of light that filters through it. Thus, Chartres offers a tangible expression of faith and demonstrates both the willingness and the ability to change design to suit the needs of artistic expression. Through an examination of the artistic and design concepts embodied in Chartres Cathedral, students come to understand a great deal about the Middle Ages, including the relationship between religion, faith and architecture.

Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird*
English 7

A modern American classic, *To Kill a Mockingbird* focuses on the **timeless** themes of justice, compassion and coming of age. Harper Lee's masterpiece reaches beyond the setting of a small, southern, American town to convey an **important** awakening of human consciousness through a crisis of conscience.

To Kill a Mockingbird examines **central** issues of human behavior: innocence, kindness and love. The breadth of these ideas makes it possible to read and reread the novel from multiple perspectives that continually offer fresh insights. While other novels have been written about coming of age, racism and justice, Harper Lee combines these themes into an **original**, gripping and triumphant whole. Students find the ideas and themes of this novel to be easily **accessible** because, like the novel's protagonist, they too are moving from dependence to independence of thought and trying to determine their own membership in their communities as individuals.

Neruda, "Then Up the Ladder" from *The Heights of Macchu Picchu*
English 7

Pablo Neruda was a well-known and much-loved poet, public voice and diplomat. Born in Chile, he won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1971. His voice has reached millions through his widely-translated poetry. "Then Up the Ladder" is excerpted from a famous work, *The Heights of Macchu Picchu*. The poem conveys the poet's pride in the Incas and his nostalgic sorrow at their disappearance from the glorious ruins of Macchu Picchu.

"Then Up the Ladder" is especially **accessible** to students because it integrates history and culture in its representation of the poet's experience among the ruins of Macchu Picchu. The poem's **originality** lies in the images of the past that surprise the reader. Neruda's associations are unexpected but powerful. Although reverence for ancestors is a **timeless** and time-honored concept in most cultures, this poem presents a particularly strong reminder to remember those who have gone before us, for theirs is the greatest influence in our lives. Neruda introduces the reader to the **central** idea that the history of one's culture is a deeply personal thing, contained in the very fabric of one's life. This idea strongly **influences** students to understand and honor their own traditions, as well as the traditions of other cultures.

"The Cow-Tail Switch" and Other West African Stories
History 7

The ancient, West African folktales that comprise *"The Cow-Tail Switch" and Other West African Stories* come from the oral tradition and were written down by Harold Courlander and George Herzog in 1947. The ancient peoples of West Africa used these **timeless** stories to teach their children the values of community and compassion.

Such traditional folktales are **central** to the human condition because they confront the individual's need to find a balance between self and community. Their **influence** lies in their ability to summon up the weighty issues of right versus wrong, and true ethics versus situational ethics, including public and private responsibility. **Original** because they present base instincts such as greed and selfishness and how those vices ultimately destroy all who succumb to them, these stories raise up the virtues of sharing and selflessness so that both individual and community may survive and prosper. *"The Cow-Tail Switch" and Other West African Stories* is **accessible** to students because they understand both

how difficult and how important it is to come to grips with their own selfishness and self-centeredness in a world that is becoming smaller by the second.

Kaufman & Hart, *You Can't Take It With You*
Art 7

Prize-winning playwrights George S. Kaufman and Moss Hart wrote *You Can't Take It With You* during the Depression. When it was adapted for the screen in 1938, it earned two Academy Awards (Best Picture and Best Director). The play tells the story of two families who become intertwined through love and business, a volatile combination that is subject to compromise. Through its portrayal of a single, eclectic family that wins out over the opposing values and views of a corporate bank, the story presents the **timeless** struggle of the just against all odds.

The title, *You Can't Take It With You*, arises when two characters discuss what we have when we leave this world and conclude that the love of friends is ultimately more valuable than any kind of material wealth. In the end, the pursuit of happiness prevails over the pursuit of wealth as the characters learn to understand and embrace this **central** notion. Although this idea was not new, its **original** presentation, first in play and then in film format, brought the message to a mass audience. Such a moral is just as **important** in today's world of materialism and conspicuous consumption as it was during the Depression. Students find *You Can't Take It With You* **accessible** not only because they can relate to the lesson it teaches, but also because they enjoy analyzing the characters and making inferences about characters' motivations. Often such analytical thinking serves as a basis for students to reflect on their own actions and motivations.

Homer, *Odyssey*
English 8

The **original** adventure story in the Western tradition, Homer's *Odyssey* has served as a **timeless** inspiration for artists, archeologists, classicists, scholars, adventurers, dreamers and students alike for nearly 3,000 years. Odysseus' search for Ithaca and Penelope is the first and quintessential story of the "the quest" in Western literature.

The *Odyssey* is **accessible** to students via its larger-than-life hero who battles legendary monsters yet displays genuine human frailties and emotions. It speaks to the **central** issues of justice, loyalty, perseverance, honor, values, culture and the human condition. In fact, *Odyssey* is one of the most **influential** works of literature in Western civilization. The scope of its influence is apparent in its constant imitation and renewal by playwrights, novelists, poets, politicians and even ordinary human beings.

Hughes, "Theme for English B" and "Harlem"
English 8

A highly celebrated and highly acclaimed Black American poet, Langston Hughes wrote in the simple language of the common people and captured what his biographer Arnold Rampersad calls an "aesthetic of simplicity born out of the speech, music and actual social conditions of his people."[5] Both "Theme for English B" and "Harlem" speak in clear, definitive terms about the Black experience in America and address racism, a **central** issue for all residents of this country. Through these and other poems, Hughes made **accessible** the voice of a section of American society often unheard by the white majority.

"Theme for English B" and "Harlem" explore the **timeless** ideal of fulfilling one's dreams. "Theme for English B" invites students to examine their own route to the classroom, to think about what they bring to their relationships with their teachers and their study of literature. "Harlem" is a short, powerful poem that warns of the danger of deferring dreams until they "explode." These **original** poems were among the first to represent the lives and the voices of Black Americans in a way that **influenced** all readers to understand and empathize.

The Declaration of Independence
History 8

The **original** cornerstone of American democracy, the Declaration of Independence is **timeless** not only because it has withstood the trials and tribulations of the American people and world history for over 200 years, but also because it contains in it America's most fundamental principles concerning its people, its government, and the rights and responsibilities of the two. This document crystallizes the fundamental concept that the government begins and ends with the people for whom it works.

The Declaration of Independence addresses **central** questions of government, such as "When does a government govern justly?" "What innate rights do people have?" and "When do the people have the right to rebel?" Its **influence** reaches beyond the American sphere since it serves as a touchstone for how millions of people live their lives. The Declaration is **accessible** to students because they are at exactly the age when they begin to question and to truly understand what their rights and responsibilities are, both as citizens and as human beings.

Ailey, *Revelations*
Art 8

Alvin Ailey was a groundbreaking Black American dancer and choreographer. In 1958, he formed the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre, which continues to be a major force in the dance world and has performed around the world on more than 30 world tours, including visits to China and the former Soviet Union for the U.S. Department of State. Ailey's artistry has been acknowledged through numerous awards and honors, including the prestigious Kennedy Center Award. *Revelations*, one of Ailey's early works, is one of the most-performed works in the Ailey repertoire. In three sections – "Pilgrims of Sorrow," "Take Me to the Water" and "Move, Members, Move"– the dance reflects Ailey's memories as a child growing up during the 1930s and 1940s in a small, poor, Texas town where the Church was the center of life and a source of hope, sharing and community.

Black American culture has long relied on the **timeless** influences of faith and community to find strength, as reflected in the spirituals and gospel songs that are the musical backdrop for *Revelations*. In his dance, Ailey fused traditional Black American music with various forms of dance–modern dance, ballet and jazz–to create his own **original** language. *Revelations* is **important** because it presents and preserves Black American experiences in a positive, uplifting light. In fact, *Revelations* provides students with an **accessible** window into Black American culture as they interpret the movements and expressions that the choreography, costumes and lighting convey. Students find that while **central** themes expressed in the dance may have Black American roots, the ideas of faith and community are common to many cultures.

Sixth

Sophocles, *Oedipus Rex*
English 9

Oedipus Rex, written in 430 B.C., is undeniably an **original** masterpiece of Greek literature. In fact, Aristotle regarded *Oedipus Rex* as an archetype of tragedy. The world of Oedipus is one that pits the will of humans against the will of gods. Sophocles endows the characters of Oedipus' world with universal traits that make them realistic and **accessible** to students. Their motives, feelings and temperaments represent a fidelity to the universality of the human experience. Sophocles' characters examine how actions in public and private spheres have overlapping consequences; this focus **influences** readers to reflect on the complicated consequences of their own actions.

To fully understand the characters in *Oedipus Rex* and the laws by which they are governed, one must consider not only the psychology but also the moral ramifications of the characters' interactions and their outcomes. The moral aspects of the drama are played out through the **central** themes of justice, free will, pride and guilt. Examining how society addresses these **timeless** issues and their implications is key to understanding the world of the past and of the present as well.

Sophocles, *Antigone*
English 9

The sheer craftsmanship of *Antigone* rendered it a classic shortly after Sophocles' death in the fifth century B.C. In fact, *Antigone* was so esteemed in its own time that Demosthenes read out Creon's speech as a lesson in patriotism for his fourth century subjects. Today, *Antigone* is a **timeless** classic that stands as one of the most enduring and time-honored masterpieces ever written. Its language and its **central**, archetypal themes are **accessible** to high school students and propel them to embark upon a quest for personal identity and moral grounding.

Antigone is a drama of enormous **influence** that induces readers across political lines and across the centuries to grapple with the ethical issues of loyalty, responsibility, respect and fairness. Both the heroic and the divine are no equivocators for Antigone. Her steadfast commitment to her ideals and beliefs stands today as a preeminent example of courage. Antigone's personal integrity and suffering in the face of certain death anchor her as an **original**, moral hero(ine). Sophocles' greatest achievement may be his creation of such a woman whose grit and idealism render her a model to her peers and a moral standard-bearer for all ages.

Golding, *Lord of the Flies*
English 9

Lord of the Flies, William Golding's allegory of the darker side of human nature, is an **original**, action-adventure thriller that combines a non-stop plot with profound philosophical implications. Through its portrayal of a group of young boys who survive an airplane crash on a deserted island and are left with no adult supervision, Golding's novel addresses the tenuous divide between humans' civilized and brutal states. It highlights one of humanity's **central** dichotomies: the necessity for a balance between a fundamental desire for freedom and the need for rules and laws.

In its microcosmic presentation of various aspects of human society, *Lord of the Flies* is a multi-layered, richly symbolic work that is **accessible** to students on both the literal and the figurative levels. Because of its shocking insights into the multiple facets of human personality and social interaction, *Lord of the Flies* has a profound **influence** on all modern readers, young and old alike, as it calls upon them to confirm the **timeless** need for rationality and reason in their own social spheres.

Confucius, *The Analects*
History 9

The Analects of Confucius are the teachings of the great Chinese philosopher as his students recorded them. Having existed for 2,500 years, even through a period of Communist suppression, *The Analects* provide a significant, **timeless** understanding of Chinese culture. Created to bring order out of chaos to make China great, *The Analects* present Confucius' **original**, innovative strategy for organizing society around the "Five Key Relationships." In fact, Confucius' **influence** helped China to achieve political and social continuity for 2,400 years.

Accessible to students, *The Analects* are **important** not only as touchstones for understanding Chinese history and society, but also because they present an interesting ethical blueprint for dealing with a society in trouble. Reading Confucius' teachings leads students to examine **central** issues, such as how one can create an ethical society and what the individual's role in society should be. In addition, *The Analects* highlight the importance of fundamental human relationships between father and child, sibling and sibling, and individual and community.

Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj*
History 9

Hind Swaraj (Independent India) is a fictitious dialogue penned by Gandhi to explain his ideas concerning passive resistance. His philosophy, which stands in direct opposition to mankind's history of violent conflict, embodies a combination of **timeless** beliefs drawn from the classic literature of four major world religions: Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism. Never before had someone so eloquently enunciated such a method of protest against unjust government. Gandhi's **original** innovation of fighting violence with passiveness was **influential** because it guided India to independence from their colonial oppressors. With their blood, passive resistors demonstrated the cruelty and injustice of British colonial rule. In addition, the **central** themes of *Hind Swaraj* speak to people fighting against unjust governments around the world. For example, Gandhi's ideas regarding non-violence and passive resistance helped fuel the fires of the Civil Rights Movement in the United States. *Hind Swaraj* is **accessible** to students and offers them an important alternative for facing a world where violence is presented as the solution in so many instances and to so many problems. It teaches the fundamental human value of respect.

Ju-Ran (attributed), *Seeking the Tao in the Autumn Mountains*
Art 9

Ju-Ran's *Seeking the Tao in the Autumn Mountains* from the Northern Sung Dynasty (10th to early 12th century) is a superb example of the Chinese approach to landscape painting. Such painting reflects an understanding of the world and of art that has been **central** to the experience of millions of people throughout history. It has conceptual links to Buddhism and Taoism, and its **timeless** impact continues to resonate today. In addition to its strong **influence** on subsequent eastern artists, it has had immense appeal in the West as well, where its **original** combination of reverence for nature, sensitivity to the moment and visual poetry find echoes in the work of such diverse artists as Asher B. Durand and Phillip Pearlstein. Even as *Seeking the Tao in the Autumn Mountains* provides an excellent, **accessible** vehicle for students to begin to understand the Chinese culture, the ideas and feelings that it touches upon are part of the basic human experience.

Shakespeare, *Macbeth*
English 10

William Shakespeare's *Macbeth* is a **timeless** examination of the destructive consequences of temptation, ambition, moral depravity and greed. These **central** themes that drive Macbeth's compelling tragedy are arguably more relevant in contemporary society than ever before. Through the hopes and the ultimate downfall of its main character, *Macbeth* enables students to walk in the shoes of a hero who falls victim to the temptations of his own vaulting ambition. The power of Macbeth's potential as a leader and the tragedy of his descent into moral corruption are striking. His depravity is a lesson as well as a warning. These strong messages make *Macbeth* one of Shakespeare's most **accessible** tragedies, a compelling and pathos-laden story of triumph and tragedy.

Among the most **influential** touchstones of the Western canon, *Macbeth* combines thematic power and linguistic beauty. Shakespeare's recognition and popularity are flourishing as successive generations bring relevant Shakespearean works into the forefront of popular culture. Indeed, Shakespeare continues to stand as an **original** literary and moral beacon, truly the "soul" of past ages and of ages to come.

Selections from the Bible
English 10

At the very **center** of the literary canon, the Bible has been esteemed as both a sacred and a secular work for thousands of years. A stunning variety of translations provides many attractive possibilities in selecting a Biblical text for its literary potential. The Biblical narratives most fundamental to literary allusions form the basis of this secular study of the Bible and its relationship to other literature.

As an **original** aggregation of mixed genres and a wellspring of myriad times, places, themes and people, the Bible has had a primary **influence** on the Western literary tradition from its earliest renderings. The Bible continues to offer a **timeless** underpinning for the study of many literary genres, from myths and legends to contemporary fiction and prose. The amazing literary craftsmanship of the Bible, along with its archetypal framework, provides **accessible** historical and cultural contexts for any study of literature. Thus, examining the Bible as literature establishes an essential foundation for understanding literature in the Western tradition.

Bolt, *A Man for All Seasons*
History 10

A Man for All Seasons, Robert Bolt's play that dramatizes the life of Sir Thomas More, touches the very **center** of humankind. More, a man of Renaissance England who loved king and country, family and faith, is thrown unwillingly into a national scandal in which he is asked to compromise his integrity. He grapples with the question of how he can remain true to his beliefs and still respect authority when it goes against his religious faith. His difficult, life-or-death choice creates significant conflicts that he must face and requires a great deal of courage. Though More lived four centuries ago, conflicts between individual beliefs and those of authorities are **timeless**.

More's life presents an **original** mirror in which we find a challenging reflection of ourselves, limitless in its inspirations. For who has not faced a daunting, life-altering decision where there may be no turning back? In reading More's **accessible** story, students encounter a real person with whom they can empathize, someone whom they can emulate. The story provides a lesson that they can carry with them when life's challenges call them into action. Indeed, *A Man for All Seasons* **influences** all of its readers to choose the ethical path, even when it is a difficult one.

Douglass and Jacobs, selections from *Classic Slave Narratives*
History 10

Classic slave narratives are essential to helping students understand issues that have been **central** throughout history and remain central in their lives. By looking at **accessible**, firsthand accounts of the inhumanity and injustice of slavery, students confront fundamental questions and ideas concerning justice, liberty and oppression. Autobiographical narratives like *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl: Written by Herself*, penned by Harriet Jacobs under the pseudonym Linda Brent, and *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* were **influential** in their time because they helped to awaken Americans to the injustices of the brutal slave system. These narratives forced individuals, communities and society in general to come to terms with who they were and who they were to become. Narratives such as these played no small role in bringing about the U. S. Civil War and ending slavery in the United States.

Douglass' and Jacobs' slave narratives have come to be recognized in historical and literary circles as "classics." Though not the first of their kind, these works represent the **origin** of a distinct and identifiable trend toward compelling, firsthand accounts of American slavery from the perspective of the slaves themselves. These particular narratives are **timeless** not only because of the central issues they address, but also because they underscore for students both the enduring power of the written word and the power of the individual to affect change within society.

Raphael, *The School of Athens*
Art 10, Fall

The School of Athens, painted in 1510-11 by Raphael for the Stanza della Segnatura in the Vatican, is indisputably one of the **central** works of the Italian High Renaissance, a period of tremendous importance in art history. Even today, we are **influenced** by the **original** ideas and visual language of that period; hence, the impact of *The School of Athens* is truly **timeless**.

The dynamic balance between classic order and empirical observation in *The School of Athens* reflects the passion of the age to understand the structure of the cosmos and the harmony of the real and the ideal. Aristotle and Plato, central among the painting's figures, symbolize different approaches to knowledge and philosophy and, as icons, make these issues more **accessible** to students. Along with the other frescoes from the Stanza, *The School of Athens* asks, "How do we know truth?", "How do we measure truth?", and "What is the source of truth?"

Gardner, *Home of a Rebel Sharpshooter, Gettysburg, July, 1863*
Art 10, Spring

The photographs of the American Civil War, taken by Matthew Brady, Alexander Gardner and others under Brady's name, represent one of the **original** and most comprehensive attempts to use photography to document a **central**, critical moment in history. Balanced between journalism and art–Gardner evidently stage-managed at least some of the images–these photographs and their accompanying texts provide a unique, **accessible** window into the Civil War and have a **timeless** effect in stirring fundamental human emotions. We struggle to make sense of these images and the events they show, just as Brady's and Gardner's contemporaries did.

Gardner's *Home of a Rebel Sharpshooter* is a powerful, but quiet, image. Through it, we see the power the media (and especially photography, with its seeming truthfulness) can have in presenting our world to us. Gardner's voice certainly **influenced** later images such as Robert Capa's *Death of a Loyalist Soldier*, Picasso's *Guernica* and many images of the Vietnam War that, in the words of one historian, brought the reality of war "into our living rooms."

King, "Letter from a Birmingham City Jail"
History 11-12

"Letter from a Birmingham City Jail," by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was written from his jail cell in 1963 after he was arrested for leading a non-violent demonstration in Birmingham, Alabama. Its **central** theme of justice, a virtue that man has sought to achieve for thousands of years, makes it a **timeless** treatise. In his letter, King provides an **original** definition of justice. Rooted in political philosophy, the distinction that he makes between breaking just and unjust laws is clear and straightforward. The notion of breaking an unjust law because it does not "square with the moral code of God" and because it "degrades the human personality" speaks to all human beings.

"Letter from a Birmingham City Jail" allows us to learn from the past and **influences** us to right the wrongs in our society. If we live in an environment where the notion of justice cannot be discussed, analyzed and made a part of our everyday vocabulary, we are doomed to repeat the wrongs of the past. Thus, justice needs to be defined and discussed if we ever expect to achieve it. King's letter provides an **accessible** way for students to engage in such an essential discussion.

Sinclair, *The Jungle*
History 11-12

Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* is a wonderfully **accessible** yet challenging book that is both a work about history and a historical artifact of the Progressive Era in American history. In examining the harsh life of Lithuanian immigrant Jurgus Rudkus, Sinclair explores such **timeless** issues as justice and the relationship between the individual and society/government. By choosing early twentieth century Chicago as his setting, he highlights a time and place sorely in need of reform, and he manages to use the novel as a catalyst for change. With regard to this intent, the work clearly falls into that unique and **original** group of works known as "muckraking" journalism/literature.

Historically significant and **influential** because it helped fuel the Progressive Era, *The Jungle* led to support for and passage of the Pure Food and Drug Act and the Meat Inspection Act. By asking his readers to examine broad issues and questions of justice which all societies have faced, Upton Sinclair produced a work of remarkable **centrality** that examines issues of justice in the modern era. *The Jungle* not only speaks to who we are, but also asks us who we are striving to become.

Manet, A Bar at the Folies Bergére
Art 11, Fall

Painted in 1881-82, Manet's *A Bar at the Folies Bergére* stands at a pivotal point in modern art history. It looks back to such major works as Velasquez's *Las Meninas* and draws from the movements of Realism and Impressionism. In addition, it looks forward in its **original** emphasis on painterly mark and on the picture plane to **influence** the great abstract paintings of the twentieth century. Its central figure is an anonymous barmaid surrounded by a world of active and chaotic color and motion. One of Manet's most complex works, *A Bar at the Folies Bergére* is an **accessible** meditation on **central** issues of how we see one another and the world. It asks us to consider **timeless** questions of what we know (or think we know), what we see, what we perceive, and what we understand.

Curtiz, *Casablanca*
Art 11, Spring

Casablanca, directed by Michael Curtiz and released by Warner Brothers Studio in 1942, is more than an **accessible** story of two people meeting, falling in love and

losing each other; it is Hollywood at its best in one of the darkest times of the twentieth century. The film makes for a classic study of **original** dramatic structure and cinematic elements while examining historically, socially, and morally complex aspects of American (and human) character. Upon its initial release, *Casablanca* won three Oscars (Best Picture, Best Director and Best Screenplay), and continues its **timeless influence** as one of the most popular films in the world today. Its characters stand as symbols of such **central** themes as justice and courage even while they acknowledge that the "problems of three little people don't amount to a hill of beans in this world."

Beethoven, *Ninth Symphony*
Art 12

A historic, monumental and **timeless** work by any standard, Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* forever changed our conception of what a symphony could be. At least twice the length of any previous symphony, Beethoven's work was **original** in its conception of breadth and length and directly **influenced** later great symphonic works of Berlioz, Liszt and Mahler, among others. In addition, it was the first of its kind to utilize a chorus. By incorporating a chorus into the final movement of his *Ninth Symphony*, Beethoven found the most striking and innovative way to use Friedrich Schiller's 1785 poem "An die Freude" ("To Joy"), with its **central** themes of idealism and world brotherhood. To make the novel concept of a chorus in a symphony **accessible** for his audience, Beethoven used a creative approach to introduce the chorus. The final movement begins in d minor, then reexamines themes from the other movements in succession and discards each, in turn, as inadequate. Finally, a baritone soloist introduces Schiller's text in D major, and the chorus joins him for the final, thrilling moments of the piece. The *Ninth Symphony* is truly a seminal work of art.

Stravinsky, *The Soldier's Tale*
Art 12

The Soldier's Tale, based on a series of Russian folktales, tells the story of a deserting soldier who sells his soul to the devil and only later realizes the cost of what he has done. This work is a music/theater piece that calls for dancers, narrators, and a very unusual orchestra of seven oddly matched instruments. Stravinsky collaborated with Swiss author C.F. Ramuz to produce this **timeless** tale of a man torn between desire and his own sense of integrity.

Considered one of Stravinsky's greatest achievements, *The Soldier's Tale* has held a **central** position in the classical music canon since its first performance in 1918. Artistically, it uses spare, highly **original**, unorthodox instrumentation and synthesizes elements of jazz and ragtime into its musical language. **Accessible** to students because it is both entertaining and profound, *The Soldier's Tale* marks the beginning of Stravinsky's neoclassical period, a major **influence** on other composers for the next 50 years.

Blake, *Songs of Innocence and Experience*
English 11–12

Songs of Innocence and Experience by William Blake is a collection built from a series of paired poems that denote and contrast the contrary states of the human soul. These poems sound many of the same **central** themes–a passion for freedom from tyranny and convention, a celebration of nature, a glorification of creative energy, and a search for the divine–that distinguished Blake, along with Beethoven, as one of the major cultural figures in the first generation of artists known as Romantics.

Blake's poetry was so **original** that it amounted to a virtual revolution in consciousness, not unlike the revolution in political consciousness that was simultaneously expressing itself in the American and French rebellions. Blake sympathized with the radical extremists of his time and championed social reformers like Tom Paine and defenders of women's rights like Mary Wollstonecraft. His allegory of the immortal longings of the child (innocence) was a central theme in Romantic literature and had a significant **influence** on the work of Freud. Blake was just as gifted a painter as he was a poet, and his masterfully painted illustrations that accompany each poem in *Songs of Innocence and Experience* make his themes even more **accessible** for students. His pictorial work is **timeless** in part because he draws from immortal sources like the Bible and Dante, and the vigor and tragic insight of monumental works such as "Nebuchadnezzar" place Blake as a forerunner and major **influence** for the Romantic painters who followed him.

Bronte, *Jane Eyre*
English 11–12

Jane Eyre is a stormy, sensitive, thoughtful classic about a young woman of tremendous capabilities whose status as an orphan creates huge roadblocks for her. Unlike the eighteenth century sensational novels that precede it, Charlotte Bronte's fictional autobiography demonstrates **originality** in its recasting of the traditional heroine as the emerging "new woman" who later dominates twentieth century literature. But *Jane Eyre* is not for women only. This dynamic tale of passion, moral choices and consequences is ultimately a story of human foibles and remarkable commitment. It has a universal scope that makes it **accessible** to men and women, young readers and sophisticated scholars alike.

Though ostensibly a traditional "bildungsroman" with the main character's predictable process of development and self-realization, *Jane Eyre*, through its memorable personas and spirited prose, demonstrates its **centrality** as a literary set piece. Intelligent, moral, original, artistically talented, independent and mature, Jane embodies the ethical and moral high ground that seems to be so elusive to characters in contemporary fiction. As an **influential** novel about introspection and psychology, *Jane Eyre* revolutionized the scope of fiction for its time and, in doing so, provided an in-depth, **timeless** study of human behavior.

Crane, *The Red Badge of Courage*
English 11–12

Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*, first published in 1895, is a classic adventure story of war, heroism, and cowardice. Crane's use of vivid imagery, his keen sense of the ironies of human actions, and his **original** focus on individual consciousness significantly **influenced** the modern novel.

Through its in-depth character study of a youthful Civil War soldier who must fight not only his enemies but also his own emotions, *The Red Badge of Courage*

introduces students to an **accessible** protagonist who is close to their age and whose inner monologues reveal conflicts of self-doubt and passion familiar to adolescents. *The Red Badge of Courage* also presents a wide array of **central** ethical and moral issues. Perhaps most important, the novel forces students to define for themselves the true meaning of courage. The story's denouement, in particular, encourages students to weigh the protagonist's actions and ask, "Is the young soldier a hero?" Despite its Civil War setting, the story's messages are **timeless**, as relevant today as any story about a young person's quest for understanding life's purpose.

Dante, *Inferno* (from *Divine Comedy*)
English 11-12

Inferno, the first of three books that together make up Dante's *Divine Comedy*, has had a literary and imaginative impact on posterity that is almost unrivaled. Cherished and studied for over 600 years, its **timelessness** stems from its poetic luster and its insights into the moral life of humanity. Early in the twentieth century, T.S. Eliot pronounced that Dante and Shakespeare divided the modern world between them; there were no others of comparable rank or **influence**.

Though Dante's narrative of "the state of the soul after death" is a thorough expression of his own time and place in history, John Ciardi alludes to its **centrality** when he explains in the introduction to his translation that "each succeeding age has responded to the universal values that underlie it–good and evil, man's responsibility, free will and predestination."[6] Even though the modern reader is not likely to be concerned with medieval theology or Florentine politics, for students the *Inferno* provides an excellent, **accessible** historical window into a world that, for all its differences from ours, is nevertheless similar in its vision of humanity beset by carnal appetites, violence and fraud. Dante shows the disastrous effects that ensue when spiritual vitality is drained or perverted, and this theme resonates in a modern age that also finds itself groping in a "dark wood" for meaning and values. In addition, the **originality** of Dante's *Inferno* makes it one of literature's most thoroughly mined quarries for cultural reference points. A grounding in this core work will enable students to make meaningful connections with a host of popular and academic sources that allude to Dante's inexhaustible poem.

Dostoyevsky, "The Legend of the Grand Inquisitor"
English 11-12

Dostoyevsky's "The Legend of the Grand Inquisitor" is one of the bolder and more confrontational, **original** works of the nineteenth century. This ironic account of Jesus' second coming calls into question the foundations of Western religion and philosophy as it examines humanity's fundamental need: a reason to live. The story's **centrality** derives from its challenges of basic beliefs about the order of the universe, humanity's place in the scheme of existence, God, religion, power, desire, freedom, authority, slavery and security. This thoughtful piece will **influence** readers to question the motivations behind human actions and thought and to ask what they value most.

The ambiguity of the work is one of its greatest strengths and makes it **accessible** to students as a basis for serious philosophical debate and discussion. Depending on how one reads "The Legend of the Grand Inquisitor," one can view it as a tragedy of collective frailty and servility or as a lampooning of human thoughtlessness. Students will confront a main character, The Grand Inquisitor, whom they may view as either positive or negative. The story portrays the uniquely human ability to

delude oneself–which, to Dostoyevsky, may not be as negative an aspect of human behavior as it sounds. This extremely sophisticated and philosophically complex work is **timeless** in challenging readers to explore their opinions about many fundamental, philosophical issues of human existence.

Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury*
English 11–12

No other American novel presents a more complex and significant distillation of character and plot, theme and motive than William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*. The riveting story of a southern American family, told from four different perspectives, is at once daunting and exhilarating as an **original** work of American fiction. In fact, many Nobel Prize-winning authors who followed in Faulkner's Nobel footsteps have attributed their own experimentation with narrative perspective and the human condition to his **influence**. Sometimes called a tragedy of Sophoclean proportions, *The Sound and the Fury* strikes a chord in readers with its borrowed title, a tether to Macbeth's great speech comparing life to "a tale/ Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,/ Signifying nothing."

The lives of the characters in this startlingly ordinary tale force the contemporary reader to respond to the moral disintegration of the Compson family, of tradition, of the southern culture, and, indeed, of every culture. For the problems that wrench apart the Compsons are the same ones that have shadowed the Western world. Frederick Hoffman, in his critical text entitled *William Faulkner*, suggests that Faulkner's "superb sense of human and natural detail is combined with a deep and intricate exploration of human psychology. . . . His work at its best is a remarkable fusion of humor, comedy, psychological insight, violence and tragedy."[7] Such a remarkable combination makes *The Sound and the Fury* psychologically **accessible** and intriguing to students. **Central** in its themes, original in its conception, and stunning in its execution, *The Sound and the Fury* stands as a warning of the decay of the past, the crumbling of the present, and the challenges of the future.

Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*
English 11–12

The Scarlet Letter is a powerful, psychological novel which reveals the destructive consequences of hidden guilt. It tells the story of Hester Prynne, the adulteress who is condemned to wear the scarlet letter "A" to publicly recognize her sin, and her lover, the Reverend Arthur Dimmesdale, who suffers his sin in secret. Set in Puritan New England, the novel introduces students to various aspects of Puritanism, a legacy that, like the novel itself, has had a profound **influence** on the American character and literary imagination.

The novel raises **central** themes of personal truth and public truth, hypocrisy and openness, individualism and conformity. Such issues are certainly **timeless** for students and **accessible** to them because they grapple with similar issues on some level in their own lives. With its female protagonist who is an individualist in a society that forbids such independent thought, Hawthorne presents an unusual and **original** tale. In addition, Hawthorne's rich symbolism enables students to look beyond the surface of the story for larger truths in this fascinating study of human personality.

Kafka, *The Metamorphosis*
English 11–12

Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* is the tale of the protagonist's unfortunate metamorphosis into an insect. One of the most **influential** literary works of the twentieth century, Kafka's **timeless** story

spans the ages and touches on the ever-present struggle of humankind for acceptance while combating feelings of alienation and inadequacy. The **central** theme of transformation is a common motif in many works of literature, but Kafka's **original** representation of the main character's implausible mutation provides new insights into understanding emotional states of mind. Students find this tale particularly **accessible** since many adolescents see themselves as undergoing their own transformations as they become adults.

Milosz, "What Does It Mean?" English 11-12

As a recipient of the Nobel Prize for Literature, Czeslaw Milosz, a native Polish writer, has been recognized for the excellence, intensity and worldwide influence of his works. Using free verse in an attempt to unify form and meaning, much of Milosz's poetry embodies existential issues. Through his poems about the Warsaw Ghetto, for example, he captures the loss of innocence, the loss of what once was. Relying upon an **original** mix of imagery from classical literature, the Bible, World War II, and his Polish heritage, Milosz emphasizes the **timelessness** of his themes.

In his poem "What Does It Mean?" Milosz writes, "I muse on the meaning of being this not that." Such an emphasis on the **central** dilemma of existence is real and **accessible** to students because, as they grow and mature as individuals, they must constantly make decisions that will determine who they become. Milosz's poem also addresses issues of mortality and failure. As an older man, Milosz faces the sorrow of having never fulfilled his youthful dreams and expresses this dissatisfaction with his life. This perspective allows students to see the implications of the decisions they make today.

Morrison, *Song of Solomon* English 11-12

In just two decades of existence, *Song of Solomon* has taken its place as one of the seminal, **timeless** writings of the twentieth century. In awarding Morrison the 1993 Nobel Prize for Literature, the Swedish Academy acknowledged the **originality** of Morrison's work when it described her novels as "characterized by visionary force and poetic import." *Song of Solomon*, one of Morrison's most celebrated works, is no exception in its **influence**.

Song of Solomon revisits the **central** struggle to define self in the face of community; however, for its characters, this quest is complicated by myriad communities demanding total loyalty. The novel functions on the recognition that "community" is neither easily defined nor singular and universal. Ultimately, *Song of Solomon* struggles with the question of how to form oneself against a constantly shifting background. It reaches across political, social and racial lines to grapple with the ethical issue of responsibility in self-development. Morrison's characters attempt to define themselves in a world where loyalty, ethics and values are proscribed by a dominant order and, thus, are not closely examined. To construct meaningful lives, the characters must liberate themselves from false loyalties and all-consuming greed. Ultimately, *Song of Solomon*, through its mesmerizing, poetic language and its engrossing plot, provides students with a very **accessible** example of how classics *can* be created in a post-modern world that wrongly claims to have no standards of greatness.

Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath* English 11-12

Widely considered Nobel Laureate John Steinbeck's greatest and most **influential** literary accomplishment, *The Grapes of Wrath* is part of the American annals of

what it means to stand up to adversity and endure. However, Steinbeck's dispassionate tone and precocious style elevate the novel to regions beyond awards or accolades. In fact, *The Grapes of Wrath* is an exhaustive, **central** chronicle of one of the most terrifying periods in American history since the Civil War. As the epic journey of a Dust Bowl family of farm folks named the Joads, *The Grapes of Wrath* weaves a tapestry of stories that run from misery to misadventure, from death and persecution to exploitation, from loss to survival. The Joads' survival is perhaps the hallmark of Steinbeck's **original** tale of the "common man" at its uniquely American core.

The Grapes of Wrath portrays an **accessible** and creditable microcosm of the American family and the American spirit, with its potential for bitterness and tragedy along with its qualities of endurance. Steinbeck's voice becomes a bellwether for all readers who understand the meaning of commitment, survival and staying power. His **timeless** literary accomplishment records the reality of human struggles and triumph in the face of daunting circumstances. *The Grapes of Wrath* is not just a footnote to history; it is a kind of literary history of human suffering and resilience against all odds.

Swift, selections from *Gulliver's Travels*
English 11-12

Perhaps the most universally renowned satirical work in the English language, Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* is an allegorical novel that deflates humanity's social, intellectual, political and economic institutions with pointed glee. This easily **accessible** and immensely popular work continues to appeal to readers of all ages–as a children's adventure story and a devastating, artfully constructed commentary on human foolishness. Swift's expertise and the **centrality** of his work lie in his ability to comment, almost 300 years ago, on our own present-day behavior, thought and institutions in the context of a story about other, fantastical people–the miniature Lilliputians; the foolish Yahoos; the giant Brobdingnags; and the honest Houyhnhnms. This **original** Brechtian alienation device, employed 200 years before the term was coined, allows the work to retain its **timeless** power and relevant **influence** in any era, for its targets are the prevailing foibles of a race that is always in need of well-aimed arrows.

Endnotes

[1] Jack Cowarth and Juan Hamilton, *Georgia O'Keeffe: Art and Letters* (Boston: National Gallery of Art in association with Little, Brown and Company, 1987) .

[2] Cowarth and Hamilton.

[3] Joel Conarroe, ed., *Six American Poets* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991).

[4] Conarroe.

[5] Arnold Rampersad, *The Life of Langston Hughes, 1902-1941: I, Too, Sing America* (London: Oxford University Press, 1988).

[6] Dante Alighieri, tr. John Ciardi, *The Inferno* (New York: Penguin, 1984).

[7] Frederick Hoffman, *William Faulkner* (Boston: Twayne, 1966).

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